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OUR BANKRUPT EUROPEAN POLICY

By Felix Morley

"It is especially in the conduct of their foreign relations," said Alexis de Tocqueville in his immortal study of Democracy in America, "that democracies appear to me decidedly inferior to other governments. . . . Foreign politics demand scarcely any of those qualities which are peculiar to a democracy; they require, on the contrary, the perfect use of almost all those in which it is deficient."

Many of our readers, reflecting on the long series of diplomatic frustrations experienced by the United States since the victory celebrations, will agree that in the above conclusion, as in other judgments on this country, de Tocqueville showed uncanny insight. This brilliant French observer, visiting the young Republic during the first term of President Andrew Jackson, sketched then at least the outline of many of those problems which confront us with the force of Nemesis today.

De Tocqueville, of course, made no broad statement without producing evidence to support it. And his reasons for believing that democratic characteristics inevitably impede the successful conduct of an active foreign policy are certainly worthy of consideration now. After listing some of the many assets of democracy, which are agreeable reading and therefore too familiar to warrant quotation, he continues:

> "But a democracy can only with great difficulty regulate the details of an important undertaking, persevere in a fixed design, and work out its execution in spite of serious obstacles. It cannot combine its measures with secrecy or await their consequences with patience. These are qualities which more especially belong to an individual or an aristocracy; and they are precisely the qualities by which a nation, like an individual, attains a dominant position."

One goes back to de Tocqueville, at this juncture, as part of the essential effort to understand fundamental, and therefore dangerous, deficiencies which will affect the imperial role we are assuming. The easy tendency to blame all current difficulties on Russian recalcitrance arouses anxiety. This self-righteous attitude could readily lead us into another war fatal to the continuation of this Republic. So it is a duty of citizenship to reflect upon procedures of our own which are in large part responsible for the present somber outlook.

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II

Within the past few days the Truman Administration has concluded one of the most complete reversals of foreign policy which has been witnessed in our life as a nation. Yet the glaring inconsistency revealed is arousing little of the critical examination it deserves.

A little over two years ago, on August 2, 1945, President Truman, together with Generalissimo Stalin and Prime Minister Attlee, approved the Potsdam Agreement, designed: "To convince the German people that they have suffered a total military defeat and that they cannot escape responsibility for what they have brought upon themselves."

The curious assumption that the fate of Germany could somehow be completely dissociated from the fate of Europe as a whole was primarily an American theory. The Potsdam declaration merely repeated, in somewhat more rational language, the wording of our key military directive of April 26, 1945 (JCS 1067/66). This had ordered "the industrial disarmament" of Germany and prescribed as policy that:

> "It should be brought home to the Germans that Germany's ruthless warfare and the fanatical Nazi resistance have destroyed the German economy and made chaos and suffering inevitable and that the Germans cannot escape responsibility for what they have brought upon themselves."

The record shows that the representatives of the British people, much more injured by the war than our own, were opposed to our almost pathological desire to intensify German suffering. And the Russians, for all they stood to gain -- and have gained -- from chaos in Germany, never gloated over the prospect as we did. Nevertheless, the vindictiveness so characteristic of the Roosevelt regime displaced the "One World" slogans. And just a week after signing the Potsdam Agreement, President Truman solemnly assured the American people that:

> "So thoroughly had they [Roosevelt and Churchill] done their jobs that we [Truman, Attlee and Stalin] were able to carry on and to reach many agreements essential to the future peace and security of the world."

How Stalin must have roared with laughter as he returned to Moscow, scattering over the limitless Russian steppes those fragments of the Atlantic Charter which we had so co-operatively destroyed for him.

III

The Potsdam Agreement of August 2, 1945, was made effective by a "Level-of-Industry" plan, officially promised "within six months at the latest." Actually, it was March 28, 1946, before this plan was announced. During these precious months virtually no production other than agricultural was permitted throughout all Western Germany.

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As eventually set forth, the Level-of-Industry plan embodied the Morgenthau school of thought, the core of which was the assumed desirability of converting Germany from a modern industrial nation to a primitive agricultural colony. Those who wish to study the almost incredible details of this now abandoned program will find them recorded in the Department of State Bulletin of April 14, 1946 (pp. 636-9).

It is scarcely an exaggeration to say that the general objective was to substitute the wooden plowshare for the wheel in Germany, forcing the most advanced and progressive technology in Europe to accept conditions which ruled before the Industrial Revolution. For example, the manufacture of ball bearings, heavy tractors and locomotives was completely prohibited and that of farm machinery, food-processing equipment and artificial fertilizer was sharply cut down from pre-war levels.

The production of machine tools in Germany was established at 11.4 per cent of 1938 capacity -- a figure cleverly calculated to be insufficient for ordinary replacement purposes. Thus it was insured that industrial decay in Germany would be permanent as well as complete. That this decay could not be stopped at the German frontier, but would spread rapidly through all of industrially-integrated Western Europe, was seemingly never anticipated by our global planners.

Restriction of European steel production, the best single index to the health of an industrial society, was the central objective of the planners in Washington. For the whole of Germany the output of steel was arbitrarily set at 5.8 million tons per annum, equivalent to about three weeks current output in the United States. The British experts predicted -- correctly -- that even the authorized industrial level could not be reached without steel production of 11 million tons.

For seventeen critical months -- from March 28, 1946 to August 29, 1947 -- this fantastic program of restricted production remained in effect for Western Germany. If the Russians had not wisely decided to ignore the agreement in their zone, the ugly farce might still be on.

IV

Effort to suppress the facts has not been able to prevent such direct and unnecessary economic consequences as the current collapse in Great Britain. The intentional destruction of the German economy, tied in for a century with that of Western Europe, has naturally intensified the shortages caused everywhere by the war. Belatedly we are beginning to realize that Britain, France and Italy will never recover as long as Germany is kept prostrate.

The Administration, uneasily conscious of its colossal blunder, now seeks to popularize the argument that we must support Western Europe indefinitely. Only thus, it appears, can we prevent Russia from taking

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advantage of the chaos which this same Administration promoted. Such is the measure of our postwar statesmanship in Europe.

Our Level-of-Industry plan for Germany has been too preposterous to allow room for more than one question. This was the extent of the damage, in rising prices and unreduced taxes, which it would do to us before we came to our senses. Less than a fortnight ago the inevitable backtracking was begun, as quietly as possible, by the British and American military governments in Germany. Henceforth these two zones alone are to be allowed to produce 10.7 million tons of steel per annum, with a proportionate increase for all other industrial products. In a classic of official understatement the announcement made in Berlin on August 29 defines the Level-of-Industry agreement of seventeen months earlier as "unrealistic," and continues:

> "It has become increasingly apparent that under present conditions Germany cannot contribute her indispensable part to the economic rehabilitation of Europe as a whole."

Of course all the blame for this bungling, whereby a European recovery difficult at best has been rendered far more so, is not to be attributed to the short-sightedness of the British and American democracies. When the Russians saw how seriously this policy would strain the American economy, they naturally made every effort to hold us to a "plan" of our own improvising. French xenophobia, always ready to cut off the nose of Marianne in order to spite the face of German Gretchen, has also retarded a fresh start.

Fundamentally, however, responsibility for the admitted bankruptcy of our German policy cannot be divorced from those failings of democracy which de Tocqueville noted long ago. Unquestionably it was the desire to excite an inflammable public opinion which led the Administration to advertise and glorify the sadistic spectacle of the Nuremberg "trials," when what the situation actually demanded was the most sober and unemotional consideration of the future of Europe as a whole. If given the essential facts a high school student could have foretold that the Morgenthau plan for Germany would quickly work out as a Morgenthau plan for Britain also. But it was not regarded as politically advisable to give the facts which now can be no longer evaded.

To say that the American people lusted for the hollow revenge which they have taken is only to emphasize the issue which de Tocqueville raised. In his biting, but fundamentally helpful, words:

> "The majority [in the United States] lives in the perpetual utterance of self-applause, and there are certain truths which the Americans can learn only from strangers or from experience."

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Not Merely Gossip *A Supplement to* Human Events VOL. IV, NO. 37

By Frank C. Hanighen September 10, 1947

The Government's loyalty questionnaire, widely publicized as a means to unmask Communists in the bureaucracy, is actually so worded that Communists, as well as other subversive individuals, can continue to hide their affiliations. Some $25,000,000 is being spent for this "loyalty test" and, in the opinion of expert observers, the money will be largely if not completely wasted because of the poor drafting of the questionnaire.

A copy of the document, which every Government employee is expected to fill out, has come to the attention of this column. It is entitled "Request for Report on Loyalty Data" and marked "Executive Order 9855," "Standard Form 84 Promulgated August 4, 1947 by the Civil Service Commission." Most of the questions are routine: age, place of birth, sex, positions held, etc. The only question apparently designed to obtain information about organizations to which the individual belongs is No. 11, which reads as follows: "Organizations with which affiliated other than religious or political organizations or those which show religious or political affiliations."

Obviously, the Communist Party or any of its "front organizations" are "political" organizations and therefore members who are Government employees need not fear prosecution for prejury if they fail to list their membership therein. In no part of the document is the question asked: "Are you a member of the Communist Party, or of any Nazi or Fascist party?" Nor is any other question asked which would elicit this information. Without such data, it is difficult to see how the document merits the name of a "loyalty test."

It remains a mystery who is responsible for the drafting of the questionnaire. Some observers blame the Civil Service Commission, but that body denies responsibility and places the onus on the FBI. It seems, however, unlikely that any blame attaches to the FBI. Meanwhile, the Communist Party is trying to draw a herring across the trail by claiming that the questionnaire seeks to obtain names of union members and is therefore a preparatory step for a purge of members of the United Public Workers Union. It is expected that Congressman Rees (Kansas) whose "loyalty" bill failed of passage in the last session of Congress, will inquire into the whole matter.

* * * * *

The outcome of the by-election in the Pennsylvania 8th Congressional District is most encouraging both for the Republican Party and for supporters of the Taft-Hartley Act. Franklin Lichtenwalter, GOP candidate, won by a large margin over Philip Storch, CIO figure and Democratic candidate. Lichtenwalter defended the Labor law, Storch advocated its repeal. The Republicans rejoice because they substantially increased their plurality over the 1946 results. The most interesting results came from Lehigh County which contains the industrial city of Allentown, where there is a big CIO membership. In that county, the Republican gains were the same as in the whole district. In Allentown, the GOP more than held its own, it is found, in comparing the vote of September 9 with that in November, 1946. This is the significant news. Privately, the Democrats had no hope of winning the District; but they did expect to swamp the Republicans in the industrial area. They failed.

Some jubilant Republicans claim a big victory, for they point out that the vote was light in Bucks County, which is largely agricultural and a traditional Republican stronghold. The heavy vote was in Lehigh County. Inasmuch as the CIO, with some AFofL support, staged a big and well-financed campaign in the industrial

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area, the results will be discouraging to Labor's hopes of defeating other candidates who supported the Taft-Hartley Act.

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Bevin's melodramatic proposal to redistribute the gold of Fort Knox may or may not have been inspired by British hopes for another loan or for a raising in the price of gold. But certainly his speech was not delivered for foreign consumption only. With developing splits in the Labour Party and increasing criticism of the Labour Government, Bevin's idea had no little demagogic appeal to the domestic audience. Growing criticism of the United States and attacks on "dollar imperialism" have had a wide popular response, especially among the laboring masses. It was not without significance that Bevin addressed his "cross of gold" speech to the Trades Union Congress, a body that forms the backbone of the majority party.

And the Foreign Secretary may well have been thinking of the day, perhaps not far distant, when he may be called to be the King's First Minister. For there is almost unanimous agreement that the days of Premier Attlee are numbered. So rapidly is the Labour Government losing prestige that the colorless Premier seems fated to be sacrificed in a Cabinet shuffle.

Observers differ widely as to how much farther the political crisis will go. Some think that a coalition government is in the cards; that the Labour Party is irrevocably splitting, and that the Conservative Party is not as yet strong enough to hold out for a general election and the chance of trying for a majority. A few believe that events will move so swiftly and disastrously that the Tories will have to be called upon to form a government. Still others are of the opinion that the Left Wing of the Labour Party will gather such strength, as the situation deteriorates, that they can take power.

A by-election, to be held September 11 in Liverpool, may offer some clue to political trends. The Labour Party has not lost a parlimentary by-election since it took office. Defeat in Liverpool, of course, would not in any way affect Labour's control in Parliament, but it would encourage the opposition. Unfortunately for the Tories there are several independents and a Liberal Party candidate in the lists, to split the vote. But Tories take comfort in the fact that, preceding the 1945 election when Labour won the district, Conservative candidates had taken first place in the two preceding general elections.

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The State Department's scheme to obtain effective UN action on the Greek problem is facing difficulties. As we reported on August 13, the Department hopes to get two-thirds of the States represented in the UN Assembly to vote application of Article 51, under which a nation can take individual or collective self-defense steps in case of armed attack. A two-thirds majority is required to put this article into effect. If successful, an international force could be authorized to defend Greece. It had been expected that the Arab States would go along with this proposal.

But, last week the UN Committee on Palestine recommended partition for that unhappy country, and the Arabs are conspicuously hostile about the Committee's decision. In fact, their anger may cause the six Arab States represented in the Assembly to seek comfort in a voting alliance with Russia and its satellites, which will undoubtedly oppose a resolution for application of Article 51. The Arabs, Russia and the Russian satellites, plus Iran, India and Afghanistan (whom the Arabs count on) could seriously threaten passage of the measure to aid Greece: unless, of course, the Palestine partition plan is pigeonholed. In any case, the parliamentary arena in Lake Success will be lively.

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When Secretary of the Treasury Snyder suspended the convertibility of sterling so as to ease Britain's desperate economic situation, he placed Canada (as well as other countries) in a very difficult position. On June 11, NMG described the increasingly unfavorable economic position of Canada in the international scene. Broadly speaking, Canada's present plight arises from the fact that Canada exports far more to the sterling area than it exports to the dollar area; but at the same time imports more from the dollar area than from the sterling area. Under free convertibility of sterling, Canada could change her excess of pounds in London into dollars to pay for the surplus imports from the United States. After the Snyder action, the Verner Ottawa Letter (August 25) described the situation thus: "Britain here, America there, and Canada right plump in the middle"; and said that Canada was "likely to be an unfortunate and unwitting victim of a squeeze play." Canada's reserve of dollars is dwindling fast.

Snyder's move was followed by revival of reports that Canada would seek a loan in the United States. The loan, according to informed circles, would not be an inter-governmental, but a large-scale financing operation in the Wall Street money market. It is believed that such a loan would have a popular reception. This would be one way of relieving the Canadian situation. Another, much less popular among Canadian voters, would be to cut down on imports from the United States and to reinstitute controls; meanwhile increasing imports from Britain and the sterling area in general. In any case, Premier Mackenzie King's hope -- like that of Mr. Will Clayton -- of restoring world prosperity by multilateral trade is rapidly fading.

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John L. Lewis reportedly is of the opinion that it would take at least five years for Britain to modernize its mines, and in any case he has his doubts whether the British coal mining industry can be restored to its former position. On April 3, Mr. Lewis gave some instructive testimony to the House Sub-committee on Miners' Welfare:

"Many years ago the British miners' union, the British Federation of Miners, . . . officially opposed the introduction of machinery, the use of power and automatic machines in the mines, for two reasons: (a) that it increased the hazards, which was not necessarily true; (b) that it destroyed work opportunity and augmented unemployment. The British mine owners were perfectly content to accept that point of view, to take out of the industry the increased revenue they took, against what would have been plowed back to put the industry on a modern basis. . . .

"The United Mine Workers of America at the same time took the position that the only way in which the standard of living could be increased in economic America, and in the coal industry, would be by increasing the productivity and lowering the unit costs and utilizing the genius of science and the automatic machine and semi-automatic machine, and the usage of power to do the work of human hands; the United Mine Workers educated its membership through the years to an acceptance of that policy against the inherent opposition that existed in the industry when the first 'iron man' came into the coal mines, on down through the years. . . .

"The result has been that the British mines have become obsolete in every economic sense. . . . The British mines have come to that situation, and England is staggering economically because of that fact while, on the contrary, here in America we have increased the productivity per day until it is now six times that of Great Britain, and it is delivered to our consumers of coal at prices less than one-third per ton of the cost in Britain, and yet pays a wage structure, on a weekly basis, that is three and a half times that of Great Britain."

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Book Events

The Dignity of Man, by Hershel Baker. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. $5.00
Reviewed by J. M. Lalley.

Just about a hundred years ago Alexis de Tocqueville defined his political philosophy for the celebrated English economist, Nassau William Senior. Je n'ai pas de traditions," wrote Tocqueville, "je n'ai de parti, je n'ai pas de cause, si ce n'est pas celle de la liberte, et de la dignite humaine." There is every reason to believe that the two causes are inseparable; for if man is not considered to possess in his own person some special worth that sets him apart from all the rest of creation, no case whatever can be made for the doctrine of his natural rights. But whence is this dignity derived and in what does it consist? Can it be, as Mr. Santayana has suggested, that the only dignity of man lies in his capacity to despise himself? Or does it lie rather, as Wordsworth has it, in his power to "suspect and yet revere himself in lowliness of heart"?

For some thousands of years thinkers and poets have been able to find more or less satisfying answers to such questions. In The Dignity of Man, to which he gives the subtitle Studies in the Persistence of an Idea, Professor Hershel Baker undertakes to trace after a fashion the evolution of this concept of human worthiness -- from the Ionian philosophers and the Pythagorean mystics to its great heyday in the Renaissance, when it became in effect almost a religion in itself. The subject, as Professor Baker confesses, is much too vast for one book, or for that matter for one mind; so there is certainly no hope of discussing it intelligently in the space allowed me here. But we may at least observe that for the Greeks the idea of human dignity was identified with the faculty of human understanding. Through his reason man might discover how to exploit his other faculties to the highest purpose and so achieve the virtue which justifies his existence. In all the subsequent vicissitudes of the humanist dogma, this identification of reason and dignity has never quite been lost.

The Greek thinkers, however, had, apart from the influence of the Orphic religion, little notion of sin and atonement or for that matter of personal immortality. The propagation of these concepts into the Western World by primitive Christianity produced, as Mr. Baker says, a temper of mind altogether opposite to Greek humanism. It was one that gave supremacy not to reason but to faith. And in the doctrine of Original Sin, as developed by St. Augustine, all the emphasis is placed upon human unworthiness. It remained, says Professor Baker, for St. Thomas Aquinas, by his natural theology, to achieve the reconciliation and synthesis of faith and reason, and so to rescue man from "the slough of impotence and depravity" in which the Augustinian theology had left him. With his dignity thus restored it was but a step into the bright and buoyant optimism of the Renaissance. That is to say this optimism was in part a legacy from the rational theology of the later Middle Ages, in part a joyful rediscovery of the humanistic tradition of pagan antiquity. In both traditions, observes Professor Baker, "man was construed as the glory of the universe," and from them the Renaissance man derived "a sense of security, the felt existence of order, pattern and sequence . . . the stars in their course, the king on his throne, the peasant in his hut, all point to the same truth of a divinely ordered universe." Thus even in theology the emphasis is shifted from eternity to the glory and wonder of the providence of God as manifest in the created universe and most of all in His masterpiece, man.

But Mr. Baker is content to leave the paragon in full enjoyment of this apogee of his dignity; whether from pity or from weariness he has refrained from describing or attempting to analyze the various influences, beginning with the Copernican astronomy, the Calvinist reformation and the Cartesian science, which have gradually reduced poor Homo sapiens to his present desperate and suicidal mood.

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